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1963/04/21

INCOMING TELEGRAM · *Department of State*

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Control: 15608
Rec'd: APRIL 21, 1963
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FROM: VIENTIANE

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1511 APRIL 21, MIDNIGHT (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

ACTION DEPARTMENT 1511, LONDON 707, PARIS 722, INFORMATION PRIORITY BANGKOK 1303, CINCPAC 876, NEW DELHI 335, SAIGON, PHNOM PENH UNNUMBERED, OTTAWA 137, MOSCOW 211.

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

LONDON AND PARIS FOR HARRIMAN

FOLLOWING IS AMBASSADOR HOPSON'S ACCOUNT OF VISIT TO KHANG KHAY TODAY OF HIMSELF AND AMBASSADOR AFANASSIEV, 3 ICC COMMISSIONERS AND SOUVANNA.

ON ARRIVAL GROUP FIRST RECEIVED BY SOUPHANOUVONG WHO WAS IMMEDIATELY ASKED BY SOUVANNA WHETHER HE WOULD BE RETURNING WITH THE GROUP TO VIENTIANE. WHEN SOUPHANOUVONG SAID NO, SOUVANNA TOLD HIM HE WAS OBLIGED TO COME BACK TO SERVE IN GOVT AND THAT KING REQUESTED PRESENCE FOR MEETING OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

NOUHAK, SINGKAPO AND DEUANE THEN JOINED GROUP AND AT SOUVANNA'S REQUEST THEY GAVE THEIR VERSION OF EVENTS SINCE 14 APRIL. NATURALLY, THIS REPRESENTED KONG LE FORCES AS ATTACKERS AND PATHET LAO ONLY ACTING IN RESPONSE AND SELF-DEFENSE. SINGKAPO DWELT AT SOME LENGTH ON KONG LE ATTACK NOW UNDERWAY AT LAT HOUANG IN WHICH TANKS AND PHOUMI INFANTRY ARE TAKING PART. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION REFERENCE MADE TO SHELLING AT KHANG KHAY (PRESUMABLY NOT ON LARGE SCALE) AND ASSERTION BY SOUPHANOUVONG THAT HE HAD SENT SEVERAL TELEGRAMS TO SOUVANNA WHICH

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WERE NEVER RECEIVED; LATTER ONLY AWARE OF MESSAGE AGREEING TO THIS VISIT.

SOUPHANOUVONG REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO PHOUMI TROOPS AND SOUVANNA REPLIED THAT KONG LE HAD ASKED TO HAVE PHOUMI SEND UP 2 PARATROOP BATTALIONS, WHICH SOUVANNA HAD NOT APPROVED. SOUPHANOUVONG SAID HE HAD INTERCEPTED COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTLY BETWEEN KONG LE AND PHOUMI WHICH RELATED TO THESE 2 BATTALIONS AND MENTIONED THAT ONE WOULD BE LANDED APRIL 20 AT PDJ. SOUPHANOUVONG ADDED THAT POPULATION THAT AREA ACTUALLY SAW PARACHUTES DROPPING ALTHOUGH IN ANSWER TO HOPSON'S QUERY HE COULD NOT STATE ANYONE HAD SEEN SUCH PHOUMI PERSONNEL ON THE GROUND. SOUPHANOUVONG IDENTIFIED BATTALION AS 13TH GROUP MOBILE. HE ALSO MENTIONED HAVING INTERCEPTED KONG LE'S ORDER FOR LAUNCHING CURRENT FIGHTING AT LAT HOUANG.

AT ONE POINT SOUPHANOUVONG STATED THAT FOLLOWING THREE ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN;

1. APPLY 4 APRIL AGREEMENT OF CEASE FIRE.

2. APPLY 14 APRIL UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING WITHDRAWAL TANKS AND FORCES OF KONG LE ALONG ROAD TO XIENG KHOUANG (HERE SOUVANNA CHALLENGED PL INTERPRETATION AND STATED HE HAD NEVER AGREED TO WITHDRAWAL OF ALL KONG LE FORCES ALONG ROAD).

3. WITHDRAW FROM PDJ PHOUMI MAQUIS, WHO HAVE RECENTLY ARRIVED THERE.

ACCORDING HOPSON SOUVANNA PHOUMA STOOD BY KONG LE ACTIONS AND MADE IT CLEAR HE RECOGNIZED PL VERSION AS ONLY ONE SIDE OF STORY, OTHER SIDE OF WHICH HE WAS QUITE WELL AWARE. HE INSISTED THAT PAST HISTORY NOW MUST BE FORGOTTEN AND IMMEDIATE MEASURES TAKEN TO STOP FURTHER KILLING. HE REQUESTED SOUPHANOUVONG TO PROMISE NOT TO TAKE ANY FURTHER ACTIONS BUT TO FIGHT ONLY IN SELF-DEFENSE. HE WILL ORDER KONG LE TO DO SAME (SOUVANNA ALSO SAID IN PASSING HE WOULD ASK KONG LE TO COME TO VIENTIANE AND WOULD ALSO TALK TO PHOUMI, BUT IT NOT CLEAR JUST WHAT HE CONTEMPLATED).

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-3- 1511, APRIL 21, MIDNIGHT (SECTION ONE OF TWO) FROM VIENTIANE

AT THIS POINT SOUVANNA OUTLINED FOLLOWING FOUR STEPS WHICH MUST BE TAKEN IN ORDER STATED:

1. CEASEFIRE.

2. ENTENTE BETWEEN PL AND NEUTRALISTS.

3. WITHDRAWAL MAQUIS AND OTHER PHOUMI FORCES.

4. SETTLEMENT BETWEEN KONG LE AND DEUANE, WHICH WILL BE DEALT WITH BY SOUVANNA AS NEUTRALIST INTERNAL MATTER.

IN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS, HOPSON SAID THAT SOUVANNA DID SPECIFICALLY STATE, ALTHOUGH NO UNDERSTANDING REACHED THIS POINT, THAT ULTIMATELY FORCES MUST RETURN TO POSITIONS AS OF BEFORE FIGHTING BEGAN.

UNGER

JTC

NOTE: PASSED WHITE HOUSE 4/21/63 HRW.

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